

Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor
609-777-2600
Roger Shatzkin(L&PS;)
609-292-4971

RELEASE: January 28, 1999

Governor Whitman Nominates New Director of Division of Gaming Enforcement

Governor Christie Whitman today announced the nomination of John Peter Suarez as Director of the Division of Gaming Enforcement.

"Mr. Suarez brings to this position an extensive law enforcement and legal background," Governor Whitman said. "In all of his positions, including his most recent work in my Counsel's Office, Mr. Suarez has demonstrated fairness, unfailing integrity and the ability to work closely and effectively with both the public and private sectors to accomplish mutual goals. He will be a great asset to the Division of Gaming Enforcement."

Located within the Department of Law and Public Safety and under the auspices of the Attorney General, the DGE is the regulatory and enforcement agency responsible for overseeing the integrity of the Atlantic City casino gaming industry.

"The Division of Gaming Enforcement has a dual obligation; it must maintain both the integrity and the viability of the gaming industry in New Jersey," Attorney General Peter Verniero said. "I am confident that Mr. Suarez will continue to balance the need to create a positive environment for the casino industry with ensuring the integrity of gaming in this state. I look forward to working with him, as we continue on our present course."

Suarez, 34, is replacing outgoing Director Frank Catania, who previously announced his resignation from the position effective January 28, 1999. Attorney General Verniero has appointed Suarez Acting Director, pending Senate confirmation of his nomination.

A 1991 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Law School, Suarez has most recently worked as a counsel to the Governor, where he handled all criminal legislative matters for the Counsel's Office.

Before Suarez came to the Governor's office, he worked in the Division of Criminal Justice, in the Department of Law and Public Safety, where he served as Special Assistant to the Director. In this capacity, Suarez assisted the director in the management and supervision of the division and was also a member of the Attorney General's Money Laundering Working Group.

A resident of Sewell, Gloucester County, Suarez began his legal career in the United States Attorney's Office, where he worked in both the Criminal Division and in the Fraud and Public Protection Division. While at the U.S. Attorney's

Office, Suarez handled white collar and public corruption investigations, including investigations involving health care fraud, election fraud and embezzlement of public money. Additionally, he was assigned to the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force and was the coordinator for the office's participation in the Philadelphia/Camden High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area.

While at the U.S. Attorney's Office, Suarez successfully prosecuted 24 members of an Atlantic City street gang, the "Abdullahs," that was responsible for distributing heroin and cocaine in a public housing complex.

Suarez received his bachelor's degree from Tufts University, in Massachusetts. He served in the United States Army Reserves.

Born in Queens, New York and raised in Old Bridge, Middlesex County, Suarez and his wife Natalie, have a young daughter, Chloe.

The DGE is part of New Jersey's two-tiered gaming regulatory system, which was created under the 1977 Casino Control Act and established both the division and the Casino Control Commission.